



The DIARY
OF THE HOUSE
IN THE WOODS

6

Day before yesterday (which you recall was Thursday)

I stopped in to see if dear Old Daddy Dandle had any tip-top tables for sale. Found him varnishing a wonderful old grandfather's clock. He never heard me come in, so I stood there, until with the last stroke of the brush he remarked: "There, Granny, that's good for another generation!"

Then followed an intensely interesting talk with him about the right kind of varnish to use for finishing furniture, either old or new. He let me into his secret. If you say so, I'll gladly share it with you later on.





The Diary Of the House In the Woods

As kept by
Katherine McDowell
and Husband Ned

Which is now
for the first
put into print
and published by

The
Lowe Brothers Company
Dayton, Ohio



So this diary is excerpts from both of ours. Of course, neither knew what the other was writing in his diary. Sometimes I'd have given a lot to know Ned's observations. But it has all been great fun since to read parallel parts. If only Ned had told me some of the things he wrote down, both of us would have had better digestion at times. But I've learned that men tell you what they incline to tell, and that mostly asking questions means they tell less. At times it makes it a bit hard to live with them, don't you think?

The Why and When Of The Diary

There were two of them, Ned's and mine, which are here brought together as one. By all rights they should have been tucked away, at the bottom of an old hair cloth trunk, and discovered by our great grandchildren, some rainy Saturday when they were playing in the attic.

Their pages ought to be "yellowed with age." The writing—of course "in a beautiful hand"—should be "turned brown and some of the words so faint it would be all but impossible to read them."

There should also have been serious contentions by one side of the family or the other against their being published. Some should "even to this day, not be on speaking terms."

But instead, all the folks on both sides are rather amused, and if I may be permitted to say, are just a bit puffed up at their contents being printed. You see, it is the first time any of us ever "busted into print" as Mark Twain used to say.

So it's quite a little event, which has led to my being asked to "appear before" several author's clubs, and give them an "intimate talk." And as for Ned, he was only last week made a member of

the Writer's Guild, which as you know, is exceedingly exclusive and all the members are authors of no little note.

All of which is, I admit, a rather long preamble to the fact that we started our diaries five years before we were married, after which both of us kept on keeping them. Just naturally its most interesting parts, to you, are those relating to Our House in the Woods—how it came to be, who designed it, how we got the money to build it, who decided the color it should be painted and how the inside was finished and furnished.

Oh yes, and whether the floors should be painted or varnished; and the walls papered or Mellotoned. So mostly it's about just these things, excepting once in a while when little differences between Ned and me have crept in. Which you will rather enjoy as it only goes to prove how full of variety and intensely human our life together has been, and is.



I'll leave it to you, could you have resisted the charm, the rare contentment that such a colonial entrance bespeaks? Doesn't it just make you feel like packing your things and staying here the rest of your life? Of course, we couldn't quite duplicate their own entrance, but we tried to get some of its good feeling at least, in ours. You may not like ours quite as well, but I know you will agree it sort of invites-you-in, so to speak. Turn to page 8 and see.

Ned wanted to build a bungalow, mission style. I wanted a half timbered house with low ceiling, and all that sort of thing. But when we visited Ned's chum's house, we each secretly knew ours must be of Colonial design. The dining room just decided the matter for me. Ned, later on allowed me to help him make up his mind, but of course he'll never admit it.



Beginning at Page 79

Which Starts Telling
About Our Planning

The House In the Woods

Yes you are right. If this tale is going to be told by our diary, we ought to let it tell it, and not make too many explanations. However, there will be times when if either Ned or I don't sort of drop in a word or two of explanation, it may seem rather vague to you.

So right here, let me say that all pages preceding 79 are mostly about our engagement, marriage and those delicious first-year-happenings which altho of tremendous importance to us, won't read like a Will Irwin's tale to you. So let's start right in after our visit to Ned's chum's.

From Katherine's

May 5th, 1918. Spent week-end at Ned's chum's. Always did like him. So jolly. Such heavy hair. Has a way of making you feel he does things. And he does. Nancy his wife is a dear girl, but can't help wondering how Tom came to marry her. Isn't it funny how a big strong man will pick out a mite of a girl who just seems to twine him right around her finger? Must say it all upset me. My mind was made up for Ned to build a Queen Elizabeth kind of a house with half timbered effect and all that. But now I'm all mixed up. Ned hasn't been very talkative since we came back. Wonder what's on his mind.

From Ned's

May 8th, 1918. Katherine acts queer. Guess it's her usual week-end aftermath. Hardly says a thing. Evenings she brings down a pile of old "House Beautifuls" and buries herself in them. Bought a book today about Colonial houses. Good thing to know about. Always pays



to keep posted. Glad our house is going to be a Mission bungalow. Katherine has been telling her friends it's going to be half timbered. Funny what notions women get.

From Katherine's

May 10th. Ned must have borrowed a book on Colonial houses. Found it under some of my House Beautifuls. Wonder why he put it there! There goes the phone. Wager it's that foreign Missions woman.

From Katherine's

May 11th. Asked Ned if the book was his? "Oh yes" he said trying to act casual. "Had it a long time. Brought it up from the office. Thought you might be interested." Now why do you suppose he fibbed about having had that book a long time? Wish Ned wouldn't tell those harmless little lies. Of course, they don't really matter, but it makes me wonder if the habit won't grow. Sometimes I get as nervous as a witch thinking about it.

From Katherine's

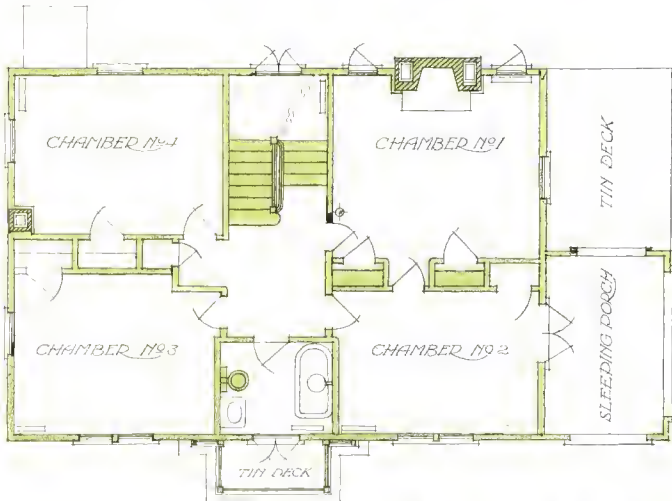
May 15th. Ned hasn't written a word in his diary in over a week. He is still acting queer. Wonder if anybody owes him money, or if he does to anybody! If only he would

talk more. Never thought my Ned would be like so many husbands, who come home and scarcely look up from their paper or book long enough to say: "nope" or "huh uh." Sometimes I think men don't care. But of course they do. It's just because they don't like to admit it.

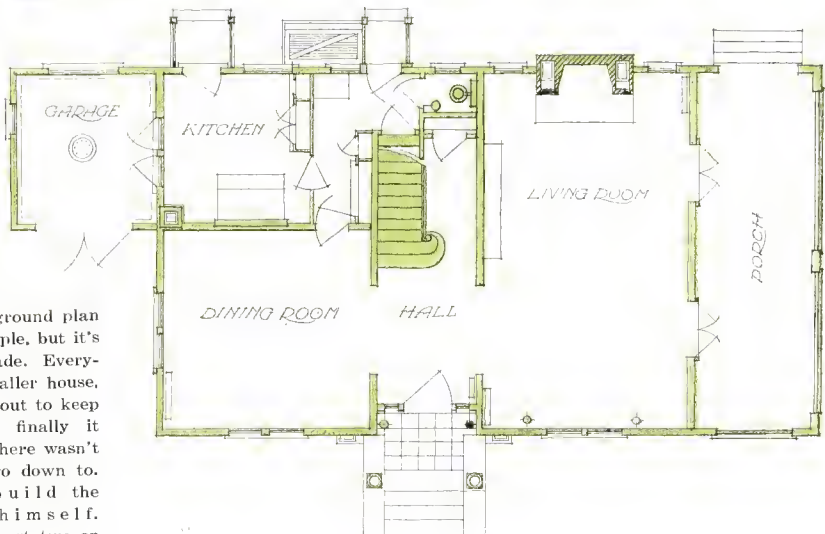
From Katherine's

May 20th. Couldn't stand it another minute, so last night when Ned started folding and refolding his paper, and making it rattle like an unhampered Ford, I asked him to lay it down as we simply must have a talk about things. "What things?"

he said in that exasperating way men have, knowing all the time exactly what things I meant. But it was funny. Would you believe it, he thought it was I who had been acting queer and didn't want to talk. But never mind about the he-saids and I-saids! It's decided that we are going to have a Colonial house. Ned was so sweet about it. Would you believe it, he gave right in to me, and before I knew it, he had his paper all covered with what he called "rough plans." Ned says he wanted it Colonial all the time. But I know better. Funny, isn't it, the way husbands think they jolly us wives?



This upstairs is all Katherine's doing. I simply threw up my hands after having shifted all the closets thirteen times and each time made them larger. Anybody would think to hear her talk closet space, that we had trunks and trunks just filled with clothes and no end of down quilts and rose blankets and hem-stitched sheets! Oh well, she humored me on the downstairs, so what am I kicking about anyway.



Just a real sensible ground plan you see. It looks simple, but it's the tenth one Ned made. Every-time it was for a smaller house, and more things cut out to keep down the cost, till finally it was down to where there wasn't any more down to go down to. Ned says he can build the garage afterwards himself. Which will save at least two or three hundred dollars.



So this then is The House In the Woods. It isn't so very Colonial after all. But it's as much that as anything. Leastwise, the entrance is. Already we have been offered twice what it cost us. (The complete house—not the entrance.) Considering as how Ned designed it every bit, that's not so bad after all. But we wouldn't sell for five times its cost.



If I ever have another entrance porch to design, am going to send Katherine away for her health. It's truly marvelous how many ideas the feminine mind conceives and quite insists on being carried out. In spite of which we are quite content with its vine-clambered result.

After Which We Built It

In glancing through the diaries, it's evident that we had no end of building botherments. First off, was going to put them all in this book. Then when I thought of what a jolly contentment-filled home we have, all those botherments just don't amount to anything. So that's why this part is so short.

From Katherine's

April 5th, 1919. Almost a year since Ned gave in and consented to build my kind of a house. Would you believe it, he even consented to a fireplace in my room. Of course, I won't use it very often, but every once in a while, "just feel like staying upstairs," and then it's mighty cozy. Today is one of those days. Wish the house was finished and a cozy little fire on the hearth.

From Ned's

April 15th. Katherine has something up her sleeve. What does she mean by talking so much about Sam Sindle's handiness with tools? What's all this talk about buying a kitchen table at Macey's and covering it into a mahogany console? And the pointers about how wide apart the shelves should be in a preserve closet? Heavens! Are there to be more closet growing pains? If Katherine has something she wants me to do, why doesn't she come right out and say it? Why are women always trying to jolly us men into doing things? Sometimes I think Katherine doesn't think I am intelligent.

From Ned's

April 18th. What did I tell you—last night we went over to Sam's for a game of bridge and before even a

card was dealt, I had to be toted around to see all the things Sam had made. After which we went into his work shop, and then Katherine sprang it. From now on I am expected to be a cabinet maker. Katherine bought a birthday bench and tools, after which I signed a paper pledging all my evenings and Saturday afternoons to their devoted use. Isn't she the little wheedler!

From Ned's

May 5th. Been having a lot of fun making things for the new home. It's honestly surprising how you can take pine or birch and with the right stain and varnish make what you made look like one of Thomas Jefferson's own mahogany pieces. Sure have the furniture-making bug. Haven't played a game of golf in don't know when. Too much fun making things.



Here Sam is at his bench, which by the way is not down cellar, or out in the wood shed, but right in a room off the Living Room. The piano is his wife's hobby and her piano is where she can play it in comfort and without isolation. Sam contended his hobby had its claims. Friend wife acknowledged the justice of the claim.



Katherine bought a kitchen table of pine, which I sawed lengthwise, put a back on it, tapered the bottom of the legs and filed a groove around them. After which gave it two coats of Lowe Brothers walnut oil stain, followed by one of their Mahogany Glaze and two coats of their Neptunite Rubbing Varnish.



After all, our grandparents surely did know what they were about when they designed their simple thumb-latched doors. This one is a direct reproduction from a house up in the Berkshires near Old Becket.

Then Followed Interesting Entries About How We Painted the Outside and Finished the Inside Woodwork, Floors and Walls

OUTSIDE PAINT

Ned admits it now. Admits he was wrong about the outside paint he used. Three years after painting, it was chalking off. That pesky white stuff that is such a task to get off your clothes. For some unexplainable reason I never claimed the wife's prerogative of "I told you so." Truth to tell, Ned admitted he was wrong before I had a chance to say it. All

husbands however, are not such good admitters. Here is what he wrote in his diary on—September 10th, 1921. "If I had listened to Katherine about the outside paint, it would be money in my pocket. She insisted we use Lowe Brothers High Standard ready-to-use paint. I declared that if lead and oil had been good enough for my father's house it was good enough for ours. But it wasn't. It did chalk off. Painted it this time with Lowe Brothers."



The hand rail is birch, mahogany finished. The stair treads are maple finished the same. Later when the children began putting their chubby little soiled fingers on the walls, we were indeed glad that Mello-Gloss was as washable as a China plate.



INSIDE WOODWORK

Katherine wanted all the doors mahogany finish and all the rest of the woodwork white enamel, both upstairs and down.

From Katherine's

June 25th, 1919. Ned says all the doors downstairs had better be birch veneer, because it takes a stain almost like mahogany. The upstairs ones will be white pine. Both will be finished with Lowe Brothers Walnut Oil Stain, Mahogany Glaze and a coat of Neptunite Rubbing Varnish. He is going to do all the upstairs ones himself. The woodwork will have 3 coats of Lowe Brothers Enamel Undercoating, finished with one of Linduro Eggshell Enamel. I can hardly wait to see it done. I'm going to do my room myself. Already did the

bathroom, and it was lots easier than darning socks or making peach conserve—and more fun.

FLOORS

Every floor, everywhere in the house, excepting the kitchen, we agreed should be finished with Neptunite Floor Varnish. It was rather nice of both of us, that we at once could come to such an agreeable agreement.

WALLS

Again we agreed. The downstairs walls are to be all finished with Lowe Brothers Mellotone, which gives a soft rich velvety effect. The bedrooms, bathroom, halls and kitchen are all to be in Lowe Brothers Mello-Gloss, which gives a satin-sheened lustre that is as pleasing to look at, as it is easy to wash.

And Then A Near Tragedy Happened



Kate brought a photo of Sally's dining room home with her. She had colored it all up so I "could see how sweet it was." It was sweet all right, but who wants a Willow green dining room and a cretonne-covered elephant-eared chair hanging around his fire place!

My, oh my, but can't a well-intentioned, but ill-advised friend make a lot of trouble! This time it was my dearest friend, Sally.

Last spring she moved to Brookline, Mass., and while things about our house were at just the stage which is neither hay nor grass, Ned thought it just the right time for me to make her the promised visit.

Of course I was brimful of enthusiasm about the house and told Sally just how every room was to be finished. (She called it "decorated" with a slight emphasis on the cor.) She hardly approved of a room as Ned and I had decided on. Thought "the wood-work should all be mahogany finish, and the



I'll admit the color scheme is attractive and the curtains and chair are in agreement. It's a dining room for a fellow with a waxed mustache and light tan spats to drink orange pekoe tea in. But cats and dogs! I want a place where we can have baked beans and brown bread. Yes and even corned beef and cabbage without the decorations frowning disapproval.

dining room must be papered and enameled in a sweet Willow Green, instead of a dull blue Mellotone; and that the bedrooms ought to have different kinds of chintzy-cretonnish-papers, instead of dainty Mello-Gloss tonings.

As for the floors, wax them. Never mind if the rugs did slip around and endanger your life, it was "the swell way to have them." The floors she meant. So I came home with my mind quite made up that Ned might after all be just a bit old fashioned.

Let's pass over my attempts to tactfully show him that perhaps we both were wrong. There wasn't enough tact to go around. Let the diaries tell the tale.

From Ned's

July 15th. Katherine, it seems is more or less of an idiot. Mostly more. Came home from Sally's filled to the brim with the idea that I am not quite up to the vogue about the way the rooms should be finished. As if Kate hadn't made most of the suggestions herself! As if we hadn't talked it all over and over; and then over and over again. Women sure are funny!

From Ned's

July 16th. Katherine started at me about the dining room last night. Made me plain mad. Tried my best to hold in. Didn't mean to say a mean word, but holy smokes, when your own wife thinks a dining room should be a "sweet Willow green," your good intentions start skidding! Finally when the vale of tears was entered, I flung down my paper and declared not another thing would we do to any of the rooms until she came back to her senses. Vowed I'd spend all my spare time building the kiddies a play house, which I'd paint and decorate just as I pleased. It was kind of cave man stuff I'll acknowledge, and wish I hadn't said it quite that way. But say, I'm no saint!

From Ned's

July 29th. Play house finished. Kids delighted, especially the neighbors. They come in droves. All of them think I am "ust wonderful." Some brought their mothers and fathers over to see. It all had kind of a reassuring effect on Katherine, and as a result last night we had a lantern light funeral and buried the tomahawk under the big oak.



Painted it outside with Lowe Brothers High Standard White. It certainly did spread easier and go farther than the lead and oil used before. Guess Katherine knew what she was talking about, but it wouldn't do to admit it—yet. The inside is varnished with Nep-tunite—two coats. Looks like a million dollars.



Evenings before we moved into the new house, Ned refinished the dining room pieces one at a time. They were of good design but in a beastly glazy oak. He smoothed them off with No. 0 sandpaper and put on one coat of Lowe Brothers black Automobile Varnish Color. After sandpapering it lightly, he followed with a coat of Neptunite Rubbing Varnish which he smoothed up and polished with powdered pumice stone and linseed oil. The result was most satisfactory. A new set for the surprisingly small sum of two or three dollars.

Having Settled Our Differences We Started On The Dining Room

Happily, all our differences have evaporated. We have come to the conclusion that as long as Ned and Kate are going to live in our house, they better have it the way they want it. Sally is absolutely out of it from now on.

Of course Ned really did act childish about it all, but after working it off on that play house, we just started right where we left off before my visit kicked up the dust.

From Katherine's

August 5th. Ned says if the painter doesn't come by Monday we'll do the dining room ourselves. It's already had its priming coat and I can put on Lowe Brothers Enamel Under-

coating. And as for the Linduro Egg-shell Enamel, I'd rather use it any day than fuss over that old kitchen stove for hours cooking things that will be eaten up in a few minutes.

THE WALLS

From Katherine's

August 9th. Ned did the walls. First a coat of Lowe Brothers Seal-cote which is better than any sizing any painter can mix up. Then one coat of Blue Tint Mellotone. When dry it had a wonderful velvety look that is going to give the richest kind of a background for our dark furniture. Ned doesn't speak of the walls as being finished with Mellotone. He

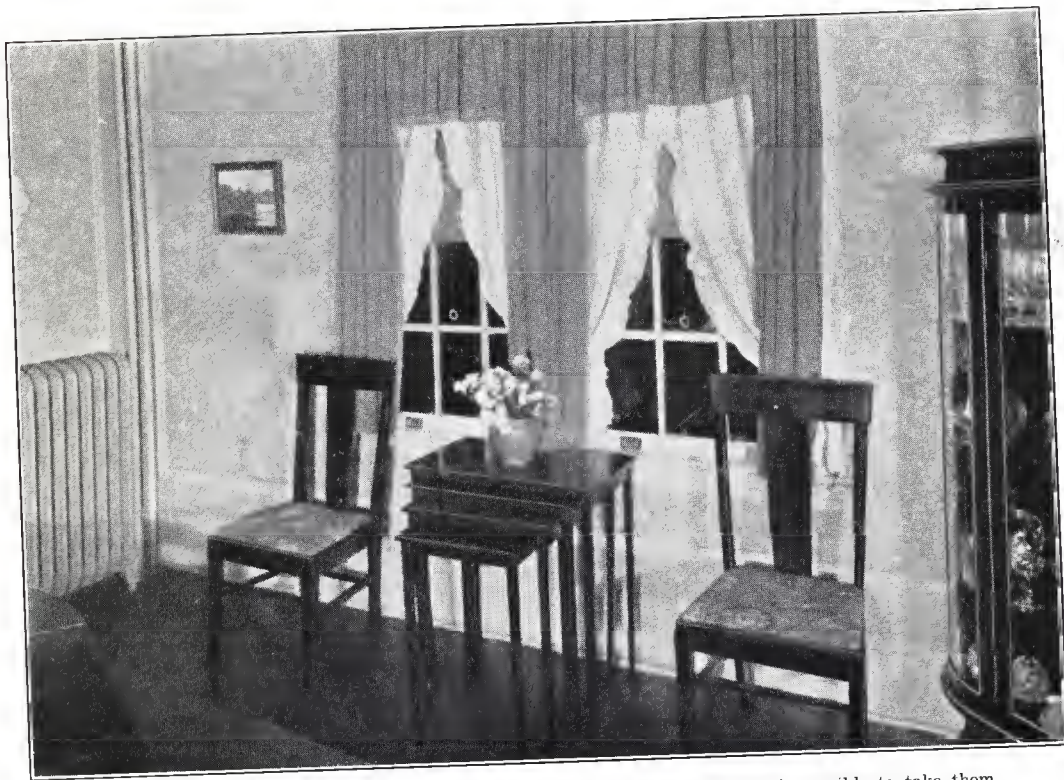
always says, "They are Mellotoned."
I like that word.

THE FLOORS

From Katherine's

August 15th. Ned did them in a jiffy, even if he did take time to sandpaper the maple smooth. That done, he gave it two coats of Neptune Floor Varnish. Said that "it went on like butter on a hot tea biscuit." It certainly did give a deep rich lustre instead of that usual cheap shiny look. He says it's going to wear like iron and won't scratch, and that it just smiles at water, hot or cold. I put the Undercoating on the woodwork. Tomorrow start in with the Linduro Enamel.

Ned brought up an old discarded screen from the office and gave the oak frame the same treatment as the rest of the furniture. Then I covered it with a figured material in white against a deep blue for the top, and a lighter blue overshot one, for the bottom. All of which didn't cost a cent more than \$3.86.



The bottoms on the chairs are held in with four screws, which has made it possible to take them out and easily recover. The last time, I picked up an all-over-figured repp, with a blue ground and a touch of old rose, that in combination with the dark finish is rich charming. The nested tables of cherry, Ned bought of Old Daddy Dandle for so little I am ashamed to tell you.

Our Living Room

How Aunt Sophia's
Good Intentions
Came Near Wrecking It



It's a real honest-to-goodness heirloom. A wedding present from "our" Aunt Sophia, delivered with its history and of course, elaborate directions as to its care. Her mother or grandmother or somebody, was a friend of Duncan Phyfe's, who gave her the table. Duncan was strong on harps, so reckon this is a mahogany "piece" all right.

Aunt Sophia is a very lovely person and withal, an accepted oracle among her relations. I have observed that's particularly apt to be the case, when said "Auntie" has money.

"Our" Aunt Sophia came to visit us just as we had decided about our living room treatment. Having caught us young, as she thought, here was her chance to "influence us properly." Having just avoided divorce on account of Kate's chum Sally's "influence," I saw breakers in sight and made up my mind somebody would be spilled out of the canoe. Felt reasonably sure that it would be neither Kate nor I.

As a result of the spilling, it's highly probable that "our" Aunt Sophia won't spend her intended winter with us. It's perhaps just as well, as our house is really not warm enough for one of her advanced age.

Kate says that my method of elimination, altho effectual, means that we get none of her Aunt's money. My reply to which was and still is, "Money! Who wants any of her money? What we want is our own home and unmeddled-with-happiness! Nothing else counts! Am I, or am I not right?"

From Katherine's

August 19th. Aunt Sophia came

to spend the winter with us and left at the end of a week. I couldn't get any reason other than she "felt the house was too chilly. That as she grew older she required a great deal of heat." If Ned hadn't been so perfectly dear to her, I might have thought he had been on one of his war paths.

From Ned's

August 20th. The living room walls are to be Mellotoned a light Cream yellow. Not too yellow. But just enough to give you a sunshine feeling, and form a contrast for our few mahogany and near-mahogany pieces. Have noted that when it's near mahogany, it's "furniture." When real, it's "pieces."

The floors we are staining a very dark oak and Neptuniting them like the dining room. A light wood floor and dark furniture always makes you feel as if the furniture was standing about, rather than a direct harmonious part of the room. That's why we made our floors dark.

From Katherine's

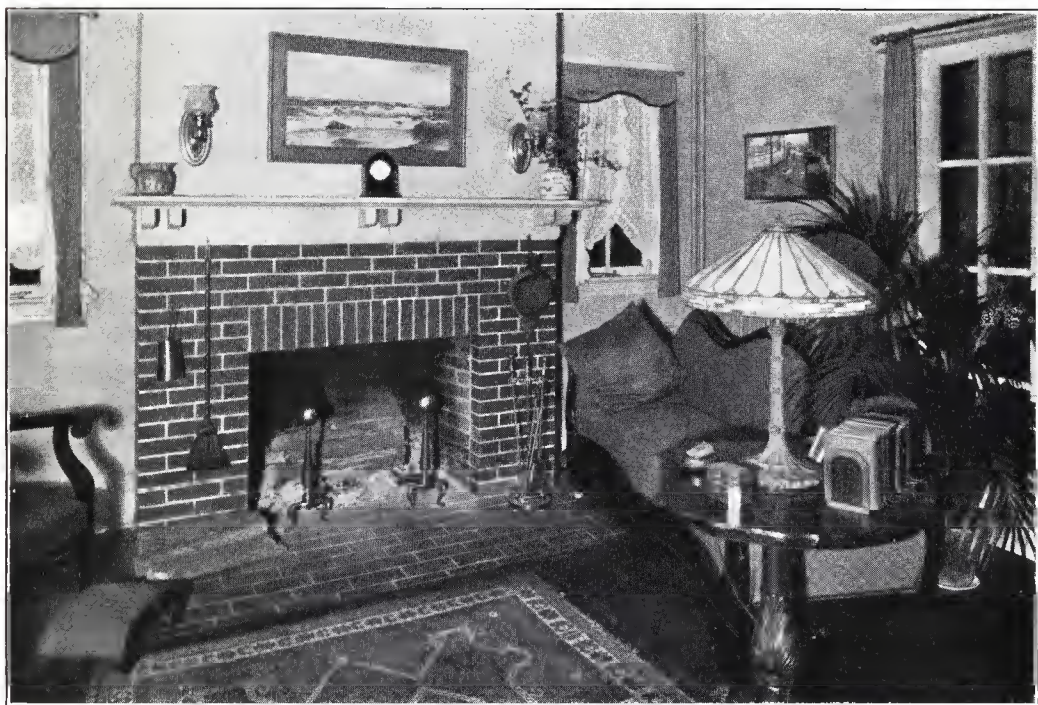
August 21st. I wanted the floors just their natural color, finished with Neptunite, but Ned had forty reasons why it should be a dark oak tone. Perhaps he's right. But what gets me, is where he gets all these ideas. Sometimes I think maybe I married a real worth-while kind of a husband.

From Ned's

August 25th. Kate insisted on doing the wood work. She made such a corking good job of the dining room, I couldn't think up a single good reason why she shouldn't. So I gave it the prime coat and did the puttying and she is going to put on the Enamel Undercoating and the Eggshell White Linduro.

From Katherine's

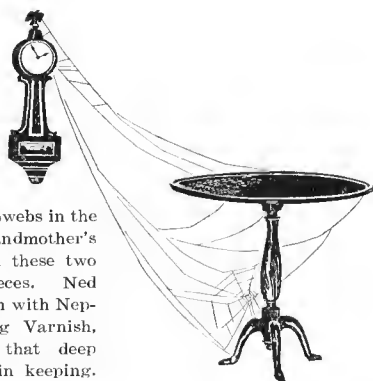
September 5th. The living room is all done. Now it's done, am glad Ned shooed Aunt Sophia off. If we had done it the way she insisted, it would have just been spoiled. Dear Old Aunt Sophia!



"Our" Aunt Sophia has yet to become acclimated to living rooms. She wanted to make this into a parlor or front room, as my dear old mother used to call it. However, it doesn't make any difference what the name is, as long as it is livable and likable.



When I was married all my family bewailed the fact that with all my housework to do and children to look after I would have to give up my music. Nothing of the kind! Not only have I kept it up, but have a music class of twenty that permits me to employ the best of help in our kitchen, and gives me a jolly bit of spending money besides.



Among the cobwebs in the attic of my grandmother's home, I found these two lovely old pieces. Ned refinished them with Neptune Rubbing Varnish, giving them that deep rich glow so in keeping.



As the sweet girl graduates say in their "essays," "someone has somewhere said," "that books like friends should be few but well chosen." For our part we like a lot of friends and a lot of books. Ned made the book case. I enameled it.



The willow furniture we had in our rented house did look a bit tacky. So Ned came home one night with a can of Lowe Brothers green Vernicol Varnish Stain. Each of us refinished a chair that night. Next night he did the table, and I the third chair. They not only look like new, but to my notion, are a lot better than ever.

After Which We Fixed Up The Porch

As for me, I wanted the porch to be a real honest-to-goodness-outdoors one, but Katherine wanted it the half-and-half brand, so the screens could be substituted with glass, and the porch be as usable Winter as Summer. I had to admit her idea was most sensible and it was built that way. However, I never feel the really out-on-the-porch-outdooriness that a real porch means to me.

From Katherine's

September 15th. Ned, nice as he is, can be so overbearing and stubborn. This time it's about the porch ceiling. I wanted it the natural Georgia pine finished with Neptunite Spar Varnish. He insisted it should be what he calls a happy blue. Claims it will not only be cheery and restful, but distinguish it as a porch and not just another room. He smiled and was exceedingly polite all through the discussion which only

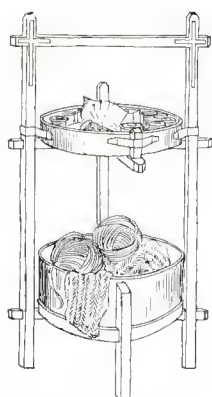
exasperated me the more. Just naturally it's going to be blue. When you live with a man day after day, you simply have to give in sometimes.

From Katherine's

September 22nd. Ned Neptunited the porch ceiling after all. It was so sweet of him to let me have it my way. Yesterday he used the same Neptunite Spar on the opening sills, which will make them wipe off easily, he said. He is most thoughtful for me. Used Neptunite Spar because it's made to stand all kinds of weather and wear and tear.

From Ned's

September 27th. Gave the porch floor its first coat. Used Lowe Brothers Porch Floor Paint. Went on like slipping your feet into an old pair of slippers. Will give it another coat in about three days. Am convinced it's going to stand lots of ruff and scuff and still stay smiling.



Originally, it was a cheese box, bottom and top. Now it's a perfectly good sewing stand which Katherine jollied me into making for her. Not so bad after all. Guess the old man is getting right handy with his birthday bench and tools.



I admit it. Admit being a couch and pillow fiend. I'd like about 3000 pillows all piled up, so when my hours off came, could just sink down in them and read a book. A Governor Bradford chair may not be just the thing for a bed room. But it's my bedroom and I like the Governor's chairs.

We Happily Agreed About The Bedrooms

From Katherine's

October 1st. If ever anyone happens to read this diary, they might think Ned and I were scrappy. But we are not at all. Both of us have kind of strong opinions, that's all. Sometimes I give in, sometimes he. Sometimes neither of us, for before we know it, we both find out that both of us mean exactly the same, only neither of us said it that way. Frankly, I wouldn't give a cookie for a man who let his wife dominate him. Of course, she can and should influence him. Just for example, Ned is leaving the treatment of the upstairs all to me.

From Ned's

October 2nd. Like never to read even the head lines of my paper last

night. When Katherine gets an idea, she sure does know how to advertise it. Never uses anything less than full pages. Last night it was about finishing the bedrooms. Wanted me to leave the color scheme and everything, all to her. Since she has been mighty white about giving in to me about the downstairs, reckon she ought to have full swing upstairs. So it's up to her now. The only thing I insisted on, was that the walls should all be Mello-Glossed, the floors Neptunited, and the woodwork Linduroed.

From Katherine's

October 3rd. Ned likes to feel sorry for himself when I don't agree with him; sort of gives three cheers for himself when he gives in about

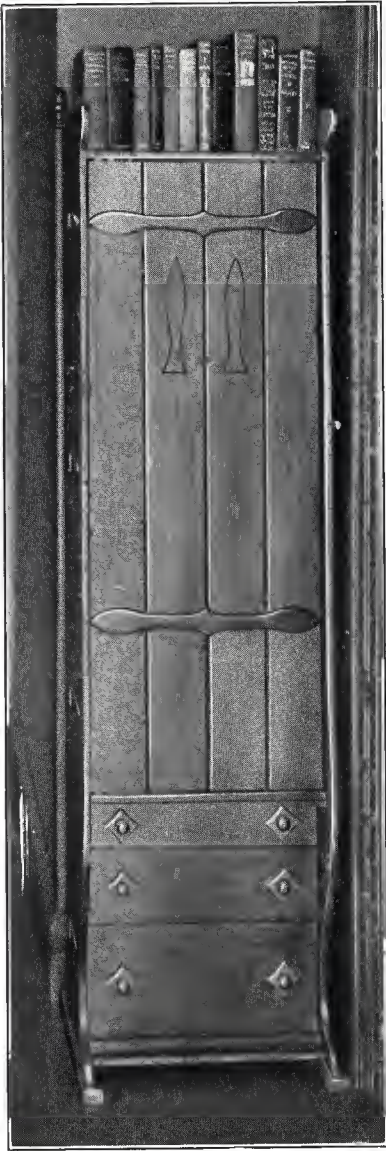
something that he didn't care one way or the other about. He surely does know how to loud pedal what he wants me to be impressed with, as his virtues. He is telling everybody how he is leaving the treatment of the upstairs all to me. But he never says a word about the three Lowe Brothers products he insists must be used. Never mind, dear old Ned, I intended using them anyway.



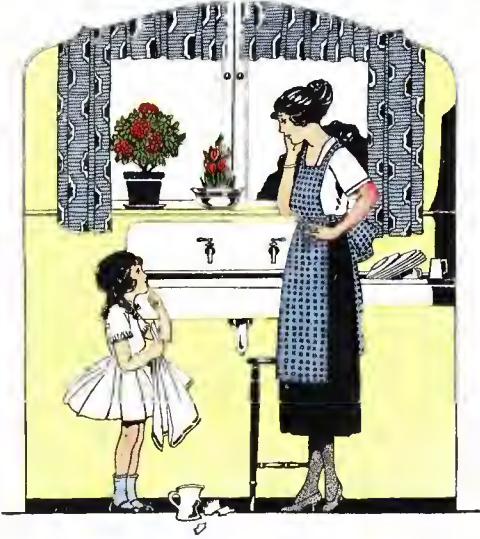
Katherine had an old book case. Then she bought another kitchen table. She inveigled me into making a sort of half console half curio cabinet out of them for her "napery," as she calls them. Oddles of fool doilies, hemstitched napkins, monogrammed table cloths, and such, which were given us for wedding presents. Things which I surmise women mostly tie up in pink ribbons and show certain so-called friends, to whom it is: "Oh my dear this" and "Oh my dear that." However, I had a lot of fun making the thing and finished it with Lowe Brothers finishes.



Architects have a way of talking about the "master's room." It always sounds very un-American to me, especially as there are two masters in our house. But be that as it may, this happens to be my room, whatever I happen to be. Dresser bought for \$9.50. Glued it up. Neptunited it. Put on glass knobs. Bed also a find. Also Neptunited chair, a one-time gift from Aunt Sophia.



When I gave Ned that work bench and such tools as our neighbor suggested, had no idea he would get to be so handy with them. It has grown to be a regular hobby with him. If he isn't making something, he is trying out some Lowe Brothers paint, stain or varnish. He has enough cans and brushes to start a Junior Paint store. It certainly does irritate me whenever a man says he can't drive a nail or saw a board straight. Every man could do a lot of such things if he only wanted to. Too many men spend all kinds of time and money fixing up their garages, and never seem to have any of either to put up as much as a small shelf in their wife's kitchen. Happily for both of us, Ned's not that kind. He would rather make things than not. This preserve closet, for example. It just fits in a niche by the dining room door. Hinging it in the middle with shelves on both halves was my idea. Also the design was mostly. Those are my "forgettery" books on top. I read in some one of them whenever keeping house gets so on my nerves, that I feel myself getting more like myself every minute. But to get back to the closet, it is stained a dark oak and Neptunited, and rubbed down to a rich satiny finish with pumice stone and oil. Looks like some old heirloom handed down for generations.



The first time little Cynthia helped my wife wipe the dishes in our new kitchen, she dropped a pitcher and it broke to smithereens. It was a tragedy to her, but a relief to us, as it happened to be one of those impossible amateur hand painted affairs which your up-state cousins inflict on you for Xmas instead of the barrel of rosy cheeked apples their beloved old parents used to send.

Now The Kitchen

For some reason or other there isn't a word in either of our diaries about the kitchen. About all I can say about it, is that it's so you can stand in the middle and have everything within a step or two's reach. The walls are Mello-Glossed a light happy blue. The woodwork is Linduro White Enamel which gives a finish like porcelain.

The floor is plain blue Linoleum, which was Dad's Xmas present. Every closet shelf is Neptunited, making them so slick and smooth that a flick of a damp cloth and they are clean. To be truthful, it was all mostly Ned's idea. At the very start he declared the kitchen was going to be as cheery and likable a place as possible. One you would like to be in rather than have a daily headache, planning so hard how to get out of it.



In designing the kitchen, we somehow forgot to include a breakfast niche. So Ned made this three lap screen and divided off one corner by a window.



Instead of a regular table he made this tray wagon holding four removable trays and having sort of a secret stow-away place at the bottom.



Everyone has their own saw-buck kind of a folding stand on which the tray is set. With the push wagon you can load it all up and with one operation take everything in and everything out. Get your husband to make you one.

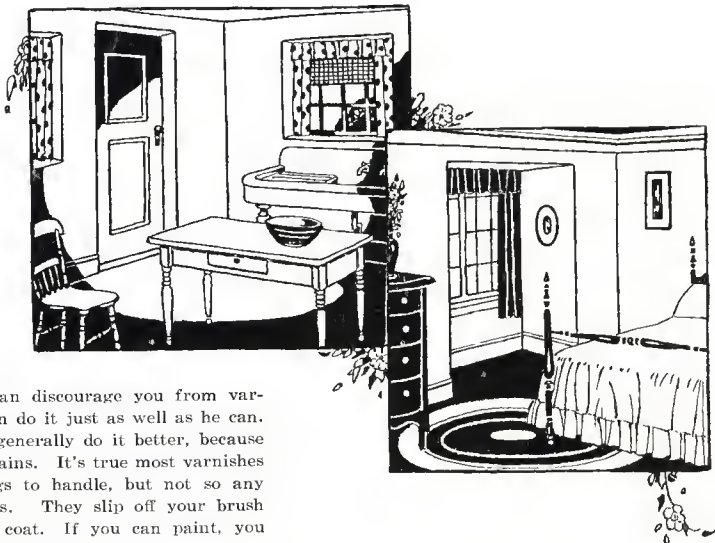
Start Right Right At The Start

Don't Experiment

With painting and varnishing of all kinds, if you don't start right you can't end right. If you start wrong you can't end right, by doing the right thing at the end. It must be right, right from the start.

You can't use cheap undercoats and expect good results with a good last coat. Especially is this true with varnish finishing. Never lose sight of the fact that the labor generally costs from four to five times as much as the paint, enamel or varnish used. Therefore, it costs just as much to use cheap materials as the best—generally more, because they work harder, cover poorly and never go so far.

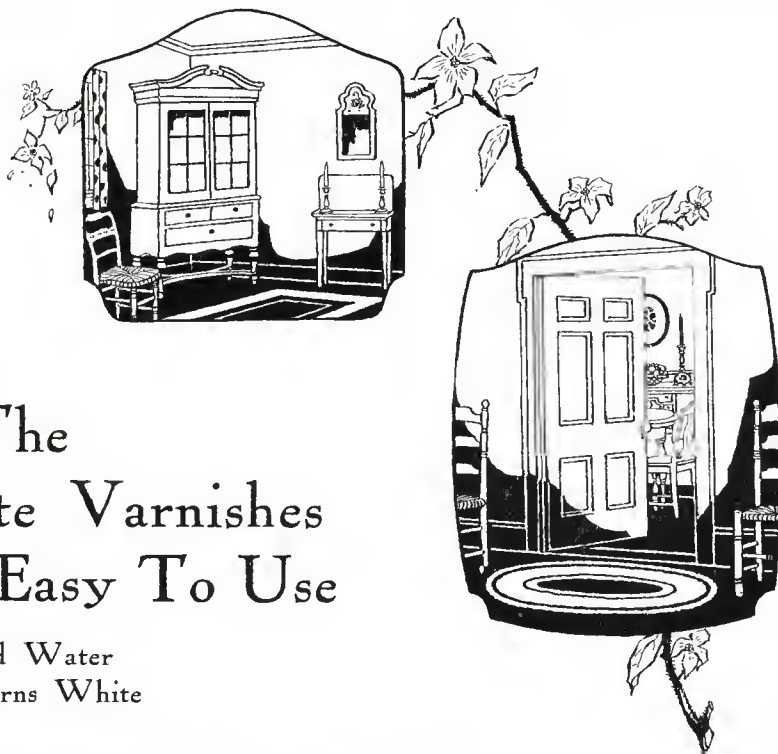
Use Lowe Brothers products throughout, and you can't go wrong. Use their Neptunite Varnishes. Don't let anyone try to convince you that any one varnish is best for any number of uses. For the results you want, you must have a specific varnish for specific purposes. Make your selections from Lowe Brothers various Neptunite Varnishes. For their names and purposes see page 26.



Don't let any man discourage you from varnishing. You can do it just as well as he can. In fact, women generally do it better, because they take more pains. It's true most varnishes are cranky things to handle, but not so any of the Neptunites. They slip off your brush like a silk-lined coat. If you can paint, you can just as well Varnish.

Why The Neptunite Varnishes Are So Easy To Use

All Stand Water
None Turns White



All Neptunite Varnishes are easy to use because of how they are made. There is a lot more to the making of them than melting up the gum in certain oils and then diluting them with thinners.

You could give our formulæ to any of the country's leading varnish makers and not a one of them could make Neptunite Varnishes. Couldn't because there is as much in the making as of what they are made.

It used to be, that to use varnish you had to be an expert. It had to be what they call "flowed 'on," or it wouldn't give a good even smooth finish. But with any of the Neptunites, you just put it on like paint, making sure the surface is thoroughly and evenly covered and that's all there is to it. You simply can't make any Neptunite show brush marks. Just smooths itself out like magic. That's why you can use Neptunite Varnishes where you can't any other. Surely remember that.



Neptunite Floor Varnish covers the wood with one solid sheet of protection and finish beauty. It has wonderful toughness. Stands ruff and scuff, without marring. The finish is not affected in the least by water, hot or cold. Not even ammonia or the soapiest of soapy water.



The Neptune Varnishes

You recall what Ned wrote in his diary about the architect's poor opinion of a general purpose varnish. His sound sense convinced him that no one varnish would give best results for all purposes, any more than one pair of shoes could be suitable both to hunt and dance in. He contended that if you tried to make them do for both uses, they wouldn't be much of any good to either hunt or dance in.

In short, no one varnish can carry water on both shoulders any more than folks can. Nature or science has never revealed how to be hay and grass at the same time. That then, is why we have more than one Neptune Varnish. These four named below cover all the essential uses in and around the home. All of them are easy to use and have great lastingness. None is affected by water, hot or cold. Or ammonia. Or most acids.

SPAR

Neptune Spar Varnish is for all surfaces outside or in, that are especially exposed to weather and water, such as outside doors, sinks, washing machines, your porch furniture, etc. For boats it simply can't be beat. It has more such all around uses than any varnish we know of.

FLOOR

Neptune Floor Varnish is made to stand the wear and tear it's bound to get. It gives none of that cheap glassy shine, but a rich glossy glow that you will particularly like. Goes on easily. Smooths up quickly. Dries ready for use in twenty-four to thirty-six hours.

INTERIOR

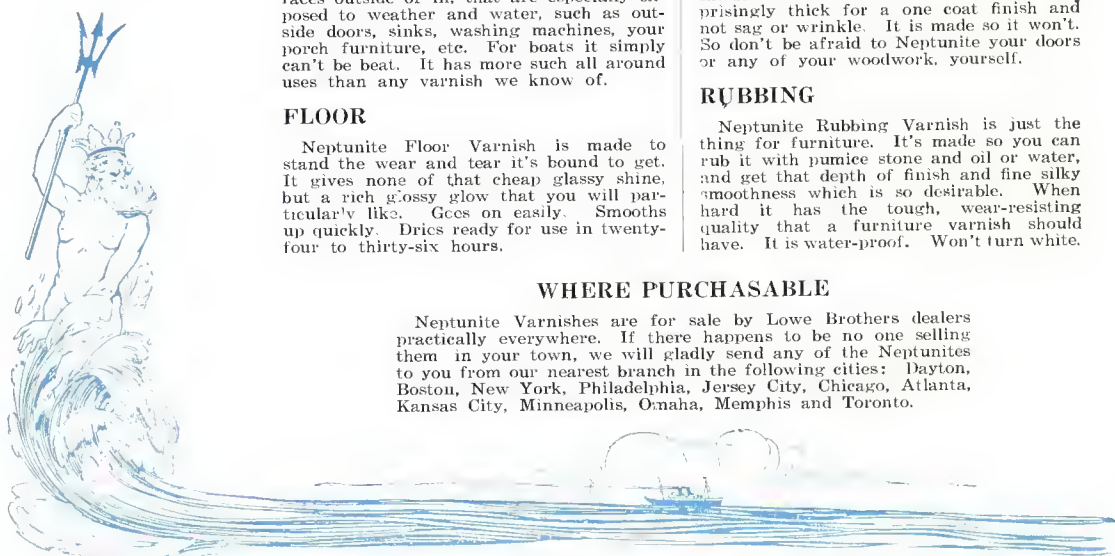
Neptune Interior Varnish for all your inside woodwork. It can be put on surprisingly thick for a one coat finish and not sag or wrinkle. It is made so it won't. So don't be afraid to Neptune your doors or any of your woodwork, yourself.

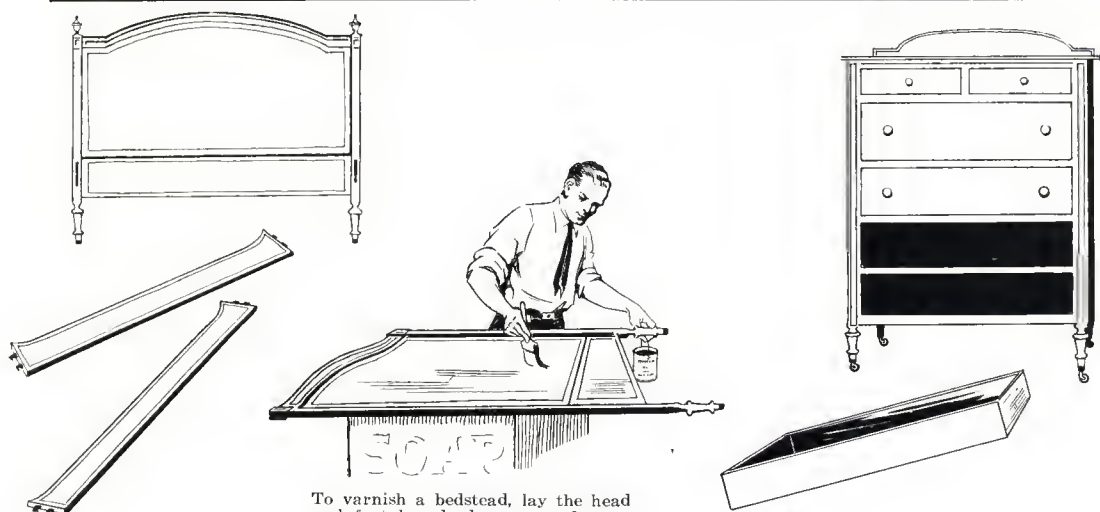
RUBBING

Neptune Rubbing Varnish is just the thing for furniture. It's made so you can rub it with pumice stone and oil or water, and get that depth of finish and fine silky smoothness which is so desirable. When hard it has the tough, wear-resisting quality that a furniture varnish should have. It is water-proof. Won't turn white.

WHERE PURCHASABLE

Neptune Varnishes are for sale by Lowe Brothers dealers practically everywhere. If there happens to be no one selling them in your town, we will gladly send any of the Neptunites to you from our nearest branch in the following cities: Dayton, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Jersey City, Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Omaha, Memphis and Toronto.





To varnish a bedstead, lay the head and foot boards down on a box or table to give you a horizontal surface making it much easier and a real pleasure. Let one side dry, then do the other.

How To Neptunite Your Furniture

First be sure to remove all dirt and grease with ammonia water. Let dry. Smooth off all over with No. 0 sandpaper. Wipe all dust off carefully with damp cloth—not too damp. Let dry. Give coat of Neptunite Rubbing. Let harden forty-eight hours. If a dull glow finish is desired, rub with powdered pumice stone and oil. If extra dull, use water instead of oil with the pumice.

If finish is badly marred or cracked and checked, better take all finish off right down to wood with Lowe Brothers Varnish Remover. See page twenty-nine for directions. If stain is also removed, then give a coat of Lowe Brothers filler before restaining. Follow with Lowe Brothers Oil Stain and at least two coats of Neptunite Rubbing Varnish and finish as above.

It's good always to have a can of Neptunite Rubbing Varnish on your closet shelf so you can keep your furniture constantly touched up. A stitch in time saves nine just as well with furniture as with frocks.



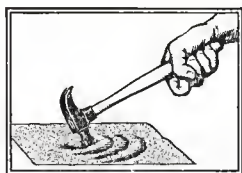
To varnish dressers and bureaus, take out the drawers, remove the handles and stand on the floor with face side up. It's the best position in which to see that all parts are evenly covered and still none to excess.



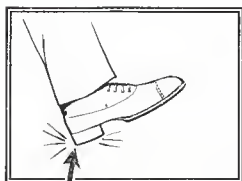
To varnish a chair, turn it upside down and do the inside parts. Then turn up and do the rest, always leaving a place free to take hold of till the last.



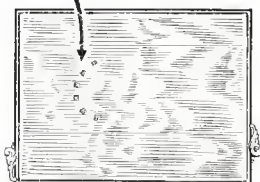
Neptunite Floor Varnish gives and takes when it receives a blow quite like a piece of rubber. It may dent, but it never mars. Never becomes brittle.



Varnish that is not elastic will soon become brittle and break by walking on like a piece of glass hit with a hammer.



You can jam a Neptunited floor hard as you will with your heel and it won't show a white mark.



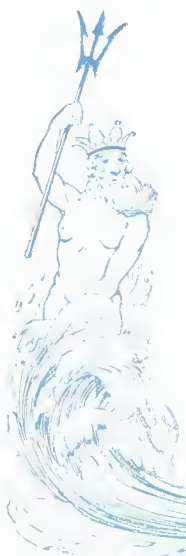
The marks of the nails may show in the wood, but the varnish has not been affected. It is so elastic it has been carried right down into the nail dents. It gives and takes, but at the same time stands wear and tear.

How To Neptunite Your Floors

Refinishing the floors is very simple and not at all the task some would have you think. First, due to the fact that various preparations for cleaning floors frequently contain more or less oil or wax it is necessary to be sure that such oil or wax is removed before varnishing.

All wax must be removed from floors or other surfaces before applying varnish. This is best done by sand-papering vigorously a small section at a time, keeping wet with turpentine while sand-papering, and finish by wiping up with turpentine. Benzine will remove oil but turpentine must be used to clean off wax. Floors that have been waxed should be given a thin coat of shellac after cleaning. Now apply one or more coats of Neptunite Floor Varnish.

This may be left in the gloss if you like, but a most beautiful effect is obtained by rubbing the final coat after it is thoroughly dry, with pulverized pumice stone and linseed oil. Such a floor will not be as slippery as with a wax finish. It is generally acknowledged to be more beautiful, and is more durable, and more economical. It will also afford more protection to the wood underneath the varnish.



How To Neptunite Your Wood Work



For varnishing your interior wood-work, be sure to use Neptunite Interior. None other gives as good results, as to ease of applying, fineness of finish, or the beauty of the finish when rubbed for a dull effect.

Refinishing your interior is even simpler than your furniture. There is no moving of things around. You are working on stationary upright surfaces. It's always better to smooth the surface off first with No. 0 sandpaper. Remove dust with dusting brush. Also take the precaution to remove all possible grease and soil by washing with ammonia water, say at least a half glass to a pail of water. It will make you blink, but how it does say scat to grease and grime.

Give the wood one or more coats of Neptunite, as you prefer to secure the finish you desire. Generally one will be found quite sufficient.

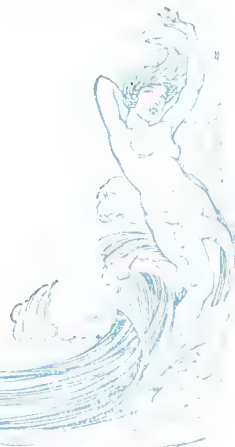


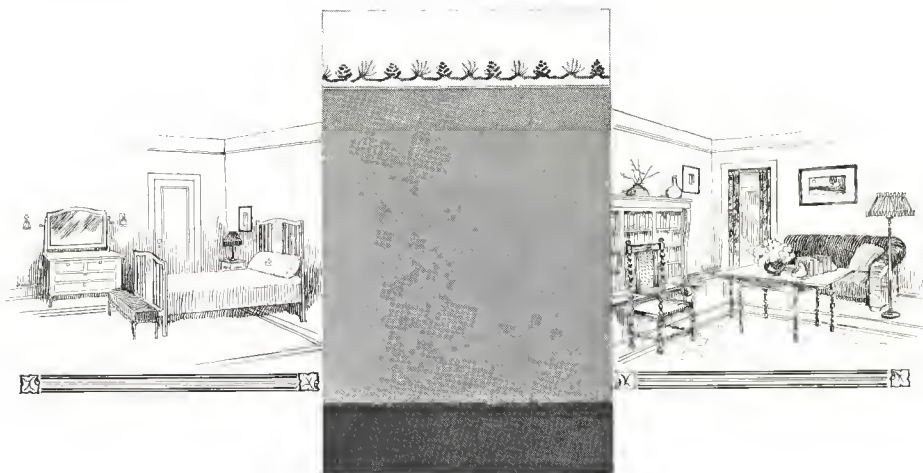
How To Use Varnish Remover

Apply freely with a good brush, making sure all the surface is covered. Let it stand for fifteen minutes or longer and you can push the varnish off in strips with a putty knife, right down to the wood.

The board above had 22 coats of varnish and see how it is coming off, just like you would peel a banana.

Before varnishing, wipe the surface off thoroughly with turpentine. If the grain of the wood is open, fill it with Lowe Brothers Paste Filler. Close grained woods do not require filler. Lowe Brothers remover is entirely harmless to the hands or clothes. So don't be afraid to use it.





For room color schemes, we even go so far as to make elevations like the above showing the actual colors produced by the actual materials.

You Are Cordially Urged To Use Our Decorative Service Department

The Decorative Service Department is for just such folks as you, who are not only undecided about your painting, varnishing and enameling, but would welcome help in your decorative schemes, as well.

If anything has gone wrong with what you started out to do, just write to that Department and helpful advice will be forth-coming.

If you hesitate to start for fear you are not going at it right, write them and you will secure a friendly reply—not one of those stilted affairs full of vague generalizations and technical terms. It will be quite like one friend would write to another.

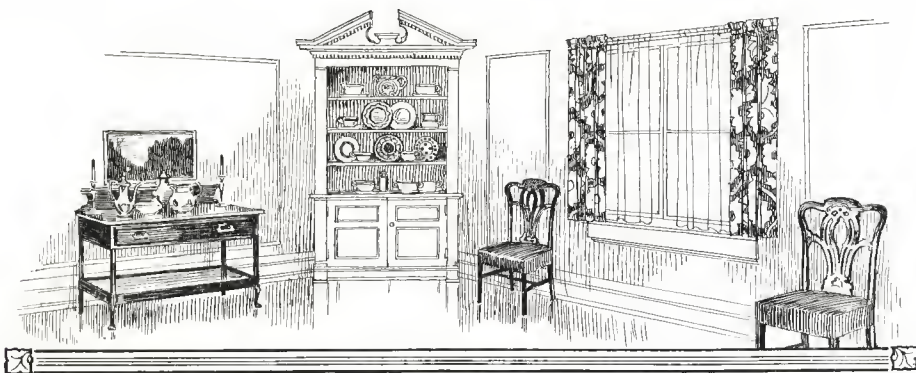
If you are full of perplexities about the color scheme for your rooms, the finishing of any wall surface or wood-work, just drop the Decorative Service Department a line and no pains

will be spared in helping you out.

At the head of the Department is a woman who not only understands the practical use of paints, varnishes and enamels, but who also appreciates the woman's viewpoint and her desire for full particulars. She will write you every little last detail, regardless of whether it takes one, two or any number of sheets, and will invite you to ask for further information on any point that was not covered to your entire satisfaction.

The men's inquiries are answered in a way a man likes, direct and to the point.

Whether man or woman, you are most cordially urged to use this Decorative Service Department. It wont cost you a cent. It may save you many a dollar and grievous disappointment.



Just supposing you should want to do over one of these Chippendale chairs or the corner cupboard; some of the booklets below will tell you exactly how to go about it.

You Are Most Welcome To Any of These Help Hint Booklets

Practically every one of them is about one specific thing, as for instance you don't know exactly what to do with your wall. Number one is devoted entirely to "My Walls—What to Do With Them." If your floors are a perplexity and you can't decide whether to varnish or paint them,

then number three and ten will be your counselor, friend and guide.

All of them are written in a chatty way, quite as if your best friend was telling you how she or he would do it. You and your friends are welcome to any of these Help Hints you want. Send for any of them at any time.

- 1 My Walls—What Shall I do With them?
- 2 Mello-Gloss—A New Finish for Walls.
- 3 Floor Paint Lessons—Four in All—Two Being Rather Good.
- 4 Your Floors—Their Varnishing—When to—What to—How to.
- 5 Wood Stains and Finishes—A Translation of Color Thoughts.
- 6 Shingle Stains—The Kind That Stay Put.
- 7 Vernicol Varnish Stain—Makes Things Do By Doing Them Over.
- 8 Living Rooms—Making them Homelike and Restful.
- 9 Linduro—Or Some Things I Found Out About Enamels.
- 10 Neptunite Varnishes—You too, Can Varnish.
- 11 That Bathroom of Mine.
- 12 That Bedroom of Mine.
- 13 That Car of Mine.
- 14 Some Half Dozen Things That Need Paint.
- 15 Figure Your Painting Costs With a Brush—Not a Pencil.



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